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McClellan, G. G.

An oration delivered at Marsh
C.H., Virginia, on the seventy-four
anniversary of American Independ
at the request of the Marshall
Lyceum





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AN ORATION

DELIVERED AT MARSHALL C. H., VIRGINIA

ON THE

Seventy-fourth Anniversary of American Independence.

AT THE REQUEST OF

THE MARSHALL LYCEUM.

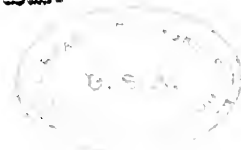
By **J. G. McClellan, Esq.**

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1856.



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1850

Grave Creek, July 12, 1850.

J. G. McCLELLAN, Esq.,

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned, on behalf of the Marshall Lyceum respectfully request for publication, a copy of your truly able and interesting address, delivered on the 4th inst.

Be pleased to receive from the body we represent, and ourselves individually our warmest wishes for your future welfare and prosperity.

Very respectfully

your ob't servants

W. H. OLDHAM. }
ISAAC HOGE, } Com't.
G. W. BRUCE, }

Wheeling, July 15, 1850.

GENT :

I am in the receipt of your note of the — inst., requesting for publication a copy of the address, which I had the honor to deliver on the late National Anniversary, at the request of the body which you represent.

Although, too sensible of the demerits of the address, to deem it worthy of the honor you would confer, I do not feel myself at liberty, under the circumstances, to withhold it.

For the expression of personal esteem with which you are pleased to conclude, I am deeply grateful, and shall cherish it in lively remembrance, and cordially reciprocating it.

I am, Gent.,

To W. H. OLDHAM, Esq. }
I. HOGE, Esq. } Com, with great respect
Dr G. W. BRUCE, } Your ob't servant
J. G. McCLELLAN.

ORATION.

The voiceful moments of another Jubilee of Independence are around about us. They are here, with their deathless story. They are here, with memories consecrated alike to our national sympathies, and to the cause of Universal Freedom. Consoling and inspiring, they abide, wherever the free thoughts of the present are contending with the decaying powers of the past.

Such is the beautiful feature of these, our Revolutionary commemorative symbols.

The same all-seeing SUN, which hails the column on Bunker Hill, and cheers the hours of this Anniversary, has dawned upon Pyramids and towering shafts of olden renown, commemorating, indeed the grandeur of human conception, but commemorating, also, enormous wrongs upon mankind—the crimes of conquerors and of tyrants.

How different the language of this Anniversary! It speaks of a deed, which in its ultimate effects, more than any other human transaction, stands connected with the highest temporal interests of the race. For, it commemorates the opening of a new era, in which, the powers and capacities, the rights and dignity of man were to be vindicated, under new auspices, and subjected to a new destiny. It signalizes the first successful step from the slavish dogmas of the “divine” right of Kings and exclusive privileges, to the broad and catholic creed of popular sovereignty and equal rights. In the affirmance of these cardinal principles of human freedom, and their vindication in Revolutionary strife, the Declaration of American Independence became a new evangel in the rights of man, and this Anniversary, a day of peculiar consecration in the calendar of human events.

But it is in its NATIONAL character that the day we celebrate has its most imposing claim on our veneration and regard.

It is in this connection, fellow-citizens, that we have come up to this commemorative scene. We have left behind us, our avocations—our strifes of sect and party. We are here, with a common gratitude for a common benefaction. We are amidst memories, which appeal to a common pride, and awaken a common enthusiasm. For, it is the story of our Independence which is here to-day, dropping from the historic hours. The scene of the great Declaration—the Senates and Armies of the Revolution—Washington and his compatriots—they are all here, in the inspiring recollections of this day. The distinguished Sages, whose deed we commemorate, have, indeed, been long gathered to their fathers. The storms of near a century have beat upon the deserted Halls of the Continental Congress, and the reapers of a hundred harvests have gathered their sheaves where shone the bivouac-fires of the Revolution. But the ascending voices of this day of Jubilee proclaim, that so much moral heroism has parted with none of its lustre, or failed of none of its grateful inspiration.

Time, indeed, has but consecrated the undying story of the Revolution. The pages of history, still glow, as warmly as ever, with the thrilling record. Ingenuous youth and patriotic manhood still linger, as proudly as ever, over that tale of high devotion and heroic sacrifice, where generous enthusiasm may not linger, without an ennobling throb. We still catch the sublime fervor, which in the visions of the orator, rings from the lips of John Adams, as he cries, “Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I am for the Declaration.” We still hear, not unmoved, that language of more than Roman devotion, as from the ignominious scaffold, the dying Hale exclaims, “I lament that I have but one life to lay down for my country.”

We feel that “These are deeds which should not pass away, and names that must not wither, though the earth forget her empires, with a just decay.”

For it is the record of

“The high—the mountain majesty of worth,”

Which must endure,

“And from its immortality look forth

In the Sun’s face.”

It has been ours, to have mingled with the last few and feeble survivors of that generation of men. We have seen

them face to face. We have stood by their tottering forms and listened, "with a never languishing delight," to the oft repeated tale. We have had them with us in this our hour of Jubilee, and seen the filmed eye light, with a transient fire, and the palsied limbs start with a momentary vigor as they seemed to hear again the thunders of Moulton and of Bennington. But we have witnessed, one after another, their whitened heads go down. We have followed the "trailing banner and mournful music," which have accompanied them, one after another, to their rest, until the yielding marble must soon proclaim, "HERE LIES THE LAST SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION."

Yet "their works do follow them." They follow them, in that scene, upon which, this days sunlight is streaming, all over their land, where from the masted harbors of the Atlantic, to the white tent of the emigrant in Oregon, the earth is rocking to the tread of a mighty civilization. They follow them, in that resistless spirit of civil and religious enfranchisement, which, at this hour, is heaving the foundations of Old Empires. We are here, to day, fellow citizens, as republican freemen, rejoicing in that inheritance of Union and Liberty; that unutterable benefaction of private happiness, of public prosperity and renown, that are linked in with the achievements, which this day commemorates.

We are here, not as Roman or Grecian republicans, amidst priests with fillets and flowing robes, amidst altars and hill-crowned temples; our liberty enveloped in the splendors of a Pagan Mythology, or helmeted and fierce on the path of invading empire. Nor are we here, as the idealized exemplars of dreams of philosophy or the vagaries of cloistered learning. But we are here as American republicans; of this nineteenth century; illustrating in our lives and characters, in our history and social progress, the practical and beneficent, but extraordinary results of sound and rational and christianized, free institutions.

Ours is no history of patrician and plebian conflicts; of Carthaginian or Mithridatian wars; of the splendid processions of a Scipio, a Lucullus, a Pompey or a Caesar, returning to republican honors, laden with the spoils of Oriental or Barbaric pomp.

Ours is the simple story of the triumphs of LIBERTY AND LAW, guided and sustained by an all-beneficent UNION. It

is the story of elevated, energized man, putting forth his powers, under new and strong impulses of hope and ambition. It is the story of intellect awakened and encouraged; of physical energy, going forth under a new heaven and upon a new earth, and under the vigorous fostering of institutions, that have broken down the ancient and arbitrary barriers to the pursuit of human happiness.

Surveying here, as from a point, the rise and progress of our Republicanism, and the magnificent compass of usefulness and benignity to which it is allied, the leading orison of this day is, of devout gratitude to Divine Providence, for that happy conjunction of circumstances, in which its foundations were laid.

It seems to have been reserved for this our land, to furnish, in the origin and development of its political institutions, the only propitious elements; the only abiding basis of republican energy and power.

The futile attempts that have been made in modern times and under other skies, to establish republican institutions, have shown, that genuine and beneficent liberty has its origin, in other and profounder causes, than mere parchment constitutions and compacts. They have shown that mere paper proclamations of popular sovereignty and equal rights do not and cannot change, with the change of rule, the constitution and order of nature; do not and cannot dissipate the clouds of ignorance and error, which ages of mental darkness and moral obliquity have engendered, under bigotry and oppression.

Where are the Republics, which, animated by our example, have arisen to emulate our prosperity and fame?

Where are the Republics whose revolutionary strife was enacted, amidst those strange scenes of tropical luxuriance and sublimity, that are filled with the story of a departed empire of gorgeous Indian civilization? The South American and Central American and Mexican republics—where and what are they?

Let a melancholy sequel of vicious and aspiring ambition arousing blind hates—let the story of civil dissensions and strife, of dark anarchy and revolution and military Dictatorship—let the scene of a clime, where squalid husbandry ekes out from its fields a precarious subsistence and lawless banditti roam the mountains—give answer.

And France—revolutionary France, around whose sec-

and coming to the fraternity of the free, there linger the beautiful aspirations of her. Lamartine and Hugo—what is she? Where in all the land of wild and brilliant story, of genius and of valor,—where, in man or his works, are the elements that can permanently secure to the rightful, wise and enlightened guidance of the people, that favored inheritance of the Bourbons? No reign of terror, indeed, has again awakened the indignation of the civilized world. No Dantons or Robespierres have again arisen to show how nearly man may emulate, and play the demon. But surely in the fierce masses of her great capitals, with their terrible inheritance of Atheism and crime; in the wide spread social evils eating at the very heart of her society; in the rank and rising harvest of civil discord, sown by dreaming theorists and enthusiasts; who does not perceive that another probation must elapse, before Gallic freedom can arise regenerate, and rational, and christianized?

Ours fellow citizens, was a different baptism. The conditions of vigorous, republicanism were here, before the note of revolution was sounded. They were here, in the race; in the general inheritance of virtuous religious culture; in the general prevalence of representative institutions and civil liberty; in the absence of a past full of time; hallowed social distinctions; in the freedom from crowded and licentious cities; in the independent and vigorous spirit awakened and fostered by that exciting contact with the scenes and struggles of a new world, which evoked all the energies of self-reliant manhood.

The elements of popular institutions had indeed been engendering from the beginning; from the earliest colonial era. A waste of waters rolled between the Colonists, and the world of Feudalism, they had left behind. But, from its political organism, they had extracted the popular elements, and incorporated them in the basis of colonial organization. Elective representation became a prominent feature of their political institutions, untrameled by the overpowering force of Feudal enactment. The Colonists brought with them, their social organization, by influences tending to a like development of the character afterwards impressed upon our popular institutions. An unappropriated continent of free-holds lay before them, from which each sturdy arm could earn independent equality, with which orders and degrees, founded on great landed monopolies, could have no

a finity. No feudal castles lifted their battlemented towers above them, to perpetuate by their prescriptive antiquity, the factitious claims of birth, or the rights of caste. No representatives of a thousand inheritors of Baronial privileges, or ancestral renown, were here entrenched, in the stately halls and manorial grandeur of a bye-gone age. The general distribution of landed property among a people opposes one of the most formidable barriers to the encroachment of power, and forms one of the most reliable promoters, as well as strong defences of popular institutions.

But the founders of the Western Empire were also the descendants of a proud and spirited race, jealous of their liberties, and who had borne them up, with a high hand, when Feudalism in a general wave, whelmed the popular immunities of Europe. The Northern Colonists, in particular, were, in their prejudices and exiled character, fitted to become the progenitors of a new order of institutions. They were of that extraordinary generation, to whom reluctant England now attributes the salvation of her liberties when in the fullness of their time, they struck down the traitorous Charles from the throne of his fathers, and slaughtered his battalions at Marston Moor. It was not for the wealth of mines or the spoils of conquest, that Carver and Bradford, and Winslow braved the terrors of the untrodden wilderness. They came not like the degenerate Spaniard, to coin from the blood of Incas the unhallowed wages of the conquerer. Their object was as immeasurably higher than this, as their rewards have transcended the ephemeral glory of the invader. Persecuted and assailed, they had come for conscience sake. Under an establishment, which at that time, brooked no dissent from its dogmas, and asserted with a cruel rigor the lofty pretensions of Church and State, their plea for toleration could only be made, upon the fundamental principles of natural right. "Their very existence" cried Edmund Burke, "depends upon the powerful and unremitting assertion of this claim." What progenitors these of men, who afterwards withstood the most potent empire of the world, in battle—for a principle! Here was the most daring resistance to colonial subjection, and here, the memorable opening scene of Revolution was laid.

Our colonial ancestors had brought with them all the civil liberties and personal rights of the Englishman; the trial by jury, the **HABEAS CORPUS**, and the Common Law, with its vigorous conservation of life and property.

But, without the virtuous and enlightening influence of religious and educational culture, popular institutions must rest upon foundations, full of insecurity and danger. It was the peculiar fortune of our institutions to have risen amidst general public virtue and enlightenment. This was the noblest inheritance of the Revolutionary age. Who, reverting to the extraordinary scenes of that day, can fail to mark the effect of these latter influences upon the events that then and thereafter transpired. Look upon the Senates. They are no assemblies of corrupted demagogues nor of wild and visionary enthusiasts. Men of no ordinary intellectual and moral stature are there. Look upon their features—calm, thoughtful, earnest, and reliant. Listen to their counsels—firm, wise and practical. Hear their great declaration, appealing to the God of battles! Go to the armies—leaders, rank and file. They are no brutal, hireling, licentious soldiery. They have left the homes and toils of intelligent industry, not for the rapine of lustful war, but to fight the righteous battles of liberty. Behold the trying scenes—the wintry horrors of Valley Forge, and that day of sublime devotion, when, with an indebted country at their feet, they laid down their victorious arms, and returned to the blackened ashes of their homes, destitute and penniless, but still covered with glory!

I stay not here, fellow citizens, to speak of those popular assemblies, frequent, and convened on sudden emergencies, by means of which, the people had long accustomed themselves to the exercise of power.

It was amidst the ripened growth of such influences as these, that the days of the Revolution dawned upon forums, and presses and political assemblies, ringing with the free thoughts of an Otis, a Hancock, an Adams, a Franklin, a Jefferson, a Henry—upon three millions of spirited, but calm and determined people. It was amidst elements so propitious to their genius and character, that the political structures of our republicanism arose.

But it was not enough, that the foundations were prepared—that a steady, virtuous and enlightened people were ready to assume the high responsibilities of self-government. Institutions were to be erected—which, looking to the past and to the future, avoiding the cardinal errors of the fallen freedom of other times, and which, regarding the inevitable weaknesses of human nature, should achieve

forever, a beneficial and wise career. To the wisdom and sagacity, which came forth and performed their great work at that precise juncture not only in American history, but in the cause of man, I shall not presume to pay my feeble tribute of admiration while I hear, echoing through the arches of the temple of this our constitutional liberty, the lofty ascriptions of gifted genius, to the memory of the great builders.

Nor shall I pause to trace the legitimate consequences of the constitutional freedom, then framed and adjusted, upon the character and developement of succeeding times.—Who, indeed, may here apply the line and plummet? Who shall say, how far, and to what extent, our remarkable governmental divisions of power, moving in beautiful harmony within their respective orbits, have contributed to the general weal? Who shall trace the momentous consequences of our noble constitutional provisions for equal rights, upon the general social developement of the people? Who shall say how much of character has been made nobler and better; how much of the MAN has been drawn out and dignified, by that unseen but potent power of public will, which, through the laws, is around us and with us, in our fields and workshops and toils, and about our choicest affections, with its strong security for private rights, and personal liberties—with its amazing incentives for every exertion of the capacities of the people? Who shall declare what has been the legitimate effect of that power, which, without swords or bayonets, has stood for near a century around religion, protecting the tender conscience from the stripes of bigotry; which has held sleepless watch, in these our halls of justice, striking from her scales, the privileges of birth and caste; which ever bids the honest lip to speak its will, free, as the unfettered airs of heaven? Who may follow and mark, upon every line of our country's history and progress, the effects of that call, which is ever sounding from the open portals of the public forums, bidding up to usefulness and fame, every patriotic and noble spirit, from every rank and condition in life? Who shall declare how many good and honorable, and far-reaching achievements, and measures of public utility and renown, have thus been secured in all the incalculable measure of their influence? Who, in fine, fellow citizens, may weigh, as in an exchequer balance, the benignant re-

sults of that peaceful political union, which has surrounded all the mighty interests of society, with the unity and protection of a powerful nationality?

But it was not less the peculiar lot of our infant republicanism, to have fallen to the guidance of that exalted patriotism and virtue, relict of revolutionary trial, and which in the providence of heaven, lingered long to mould and guide its trust, ere it ascended, amidst the expanding benignance it had engendered. Honor, honor, this day, to the early statesmen of the republic, whose lofty policy, founded in the eternal dictates of justice and right, has contributed so powerfully to the national security and fame, and which still moves as a luminous pillar, in the van of our pathway.

Such, fellow citizens, was the propitious opening of this our republicanism. How comprehensive the results which have followed, beyond the vision of John Adams, when he exclaimed, "Where will the consequences of the American Revolution end?" Behold our annals. They are replete with proud recollections of men, and their achievements in every path of fame. Behold our vigorous and imposing present, open, visible, palpable to every eye and sense. Behold our great interests, spreading, diffusing, animating our vast confederacy, our religion and letters and science, our inventive genius in the arts,—our commerce competing with veteran empires in the uttermost parts of the earth; our agriculture, our manufactures, our great industrial energies, all, all sweeping beyond the far prairies. It is but as yesteday, that the primeval forests were upon these plains, and the strange melodies of barbarian incantation went up among these hills. The genius of civilization has come to us from her ancient seats. In the scope, and under the stimulus of our free institutions, her path has been onward. Her voice is already calling to us, from the far shores of the Pacific, and from its golden sands the last burnished pillars of her western empire flash in the descending sun!

But our name has gone out among the nations. From the days of the revolution down to the momentous present, this our republicanism has filled a large space, in the eyes of mankind. From amidst the castellated, armed and oppressive Feudalism of Europe, men have looked out upon our ascending path. They have witnessed no career [of

fiery propagandism. They have seen no armies or navies rushing forth, under the national sanction and in the name of liberty, to desolate and ravage the earth.

But they have seen the suns of near a century going down over this great Western Commonwealth of citizens pursuing, without arbitrary orders and degrees without standing armies, and yet without civil tumult and commotion, a peaceful, manly energetic progress to prosperity and renown. And what have been the results? Blot out, fellow citizens, blot out, this day, the past history of this republic; sink it out of all legitimate connection with the annals of mankind, and where would have been the cause of popular rights in Europe and elsewhere, now? Where would have been those constitutional guarantees to popular freedom, which mark its vigorous advance in the climes of old Feudalism?

Standing, then, to-day, with our republicanism, auspicious in its origin and character, with the unmistakable evidences of its bountiful influence, lifting themselves up clearly defined to our reason and sense; with the resistless conviction, also, bred of our inmost hearts, that yet more auspicious results await, and must surround the future progress of this people, if we are true to ourselves and to our relations to our institutions, what incentives are urging us, at this hour, to surround this our trust, with all the elements of security and perpetuity, which gratitude or reverence can bring from the past, or duty and responsibility can draw from the present, and to bear it on, as an ark freighted with incalculable treasure!

When we look around upon our great inheritance, and behold the conflict, which is ever waging within it between influences, on the one hand *conservative*, and on the other *subversive* of it; when we reflect, that Reason must ever have here the highest incentive, for lofty, noble, patriotic action, and *passion* the broadest scope, for the play of its ignoble and corrupt desires, we are reverted to the tenure, the only tenure by which that inheritance may be maintained, in its purity, its usefulness and its vigor.— That tenure let us write, this day, upon our hearts. Let us catch its sentiment in its fulness, and take it home with us, teaching it, proclaiming it, voicing it forth, in the march of our daily lives. That tenure, be it forever spoken, is an enlightened, virtuous patriotic, public will.

Viewing our institutions and their position in whatsoever light we may ; viewing them, as surrounded, with any or all other elements of stability, arising from whatever source, whether from their admirable adjustment of opposing forces, and their capability of expansion to the spirit and wants of the age; or from the deep seated consciousness of their blessings ; the general reverence and attachment ; or finally, from the powerful and quickening agencies and forces of these days of progress ; holding even, that popular institutions, to some degree, are here, an inevitable necessity for many generations ; the last analysis, to which we come, is, that this our republicanism is based *upon the presumed capacity of the people for self government.*

But, what a momentous conclusion is this ! It argues an ever present sense of the rights duties and relations, subsisting between citizen and citizen. It argues correct conceptions always, of the nature, limitations, and objects of government. It argues sound, virtuous principles ever fresh, ever vigorous, ever coming up, to stay and beat back, the heavy pressing forces of deception and corruption.

It has been our fortune, hitherto to have had intelligence enough, and virtue enough in the land, to animate our beautiful system of free government, with a healthy conservatism, which has withstood the severest shocks. Amidst all the party rancor and fanaticism which have raged around them, an enlightened sense of duty and responsibility has stood up and vindicated itself, patriotically and firmly. And it is a cheering attestation of this American intelligence, and law and order abiding sentiment, that, beyond the deserts and mountain ranges of the West, there are, at this hour, by the sands of the Pacific, peaceful, orderly well sustained civil governments, upheld by no files of soldiery, by no lines of battle ships ; but resting on the American basis, holding the American allegiance and extending the American power and fame.

It behooves then every man, bearing the American stamp and superscription, to enlist his best energies in fostering upon all occasions, and at all times, an intelligent high toned public sentiment ; to use the reason his God has given him, and the scope his institutions afford him, to cherish and build it up. It behooves him to encourage the spread of religion and morals and knowledge, so that

the relations, duties, rights and responsibilities of the republican citizen may be broadly appreciated and manfully asserted; that an ever abiding forbearance, magnanimity and sense of justice may prevail, tempering the strifes of party, disarming fanaticism of its strength and terror, holding up and keeping up, at all times, the great and common and undisputed interests of the country.

All things proclaim the utilitarian, practical industrial age. Wherever the stagnancy of mind has been broken, mankind have been thronging up to the fields of industry and labor, which ceaseless discovery and research are continuously laying open. Under these, our propitious skies, rewarded industrial interests have become the predominant social force. Liberty, with us, has, indeed, as anciently, awakened the man. But the spirit developed, has gone to its labors, in another sphere, than that of idealized beauty in Architecture, Sculpture, lofty Letters, or of ceaseless emulation in the Arts and Sciences, and splendid Military exploits. The cultivation of the Arts and Sciences, among us, has taken a direction bearing upon this predominant utilitarian, practical industrial spirit of our people. No Sunian Appollos, of faultless mould and imperial mien, rise, in dazzling marble, from our ocean crags. No majestic Parthenons here attest the exquisite, the almost divine, sense of beauty, to which genius of a free nation may be attuned, under the poetic inspirations of Mythology.—But the path of the Iron Horse through our mountains, and over our streams; our populous waterfalls; our cities resounding with the clatter, and veiled in the smoke of great factories—our boundless area of busy husbandry—our great host of keen-eyed commerce, which no man may number—all proclaim the predominating practical, industrial genius of our nation.

But if revived industry is among us, with all the power and forces of the age, it is here also, with its great questions—questions of the rights of labor and capital—questions of fundamental reform, and sounding through the whole social organization. Hosts of demagogues, fanatics and deceivers, in the press and out of it, stand ready to foment and fatten upon the prejudices and passions of this ruling element in our body politic. Here, then, is a demand for calm, patriotic, conservative sentiment, allied neither to undue reverence nor radicalism, but alive always

to genuine abuse, and cutting it down, and thus forever stripping the madness and folly of ultraism of the only guise, in which it becomes dangerous.

But we stand in an extraordinary political attitude to the world. Amidst the convulsions of the nations, we have played no part, save that of silent, all powerful example. We have acted upon principle, from the beginning. We are no propagandists through the torches of insurrection, or the thunders of the battle-field. We have indeed, sent forth our emissaries of propagandism. But, they have been the white-winged fleets of commerce proclaiming through all the earth, that the commercial empire of Freedom lies not entombed, with the once proud Queen of the Adriatic, nor its energies with her merchant princes. Let it not be said of us, "hitherto you have been weak, now you are powerful and great, and will be tempted to play the part which you dared not venture before." Let the councils of the past prevail, with increased force. Let public sentiment be wrought to a religious abhorrence of every end of all schemes of military propagandism and conquest. It is, indeed, noble, to mingle our tears with those of weeping exiles from ruthless despotism. It is noble, to exult as the heroic Kossuth strikes for independence, and rises to a kindred with our Washington. It is noble to rouse, and concentrate the just scorn of civilized man upon the brutal deeds, which have disgraced the victorious Austrian. But ours is a higher mission than that of the sword, whether it be upon the path of the propagandist, or the conqueror.

Already our Southern watch-towers look out upon the bland skies and effeminate races of the upper tropics.— There are not wanting in the land, spirits reckless enough to tarnish the unsullied stars and stripes, with the leprosy of conquest. But let every man who values a republican inheritance for his children, teach both them and himself, to turn forever with loathing, from the serpent whispers of the spirit of conquest. For be it never forgotten, while the hoar Coliseum has a voice, or fallen Iberia a story, that the spoils of this lust have been, as the apples of Sodom, to the nations that have eaten.

Finally, fellow citizens, our present relations to each other, as Americans, amidst the angry debates, which disturb our national councils, and the sectional distrust which

threatens, and mars our peace, demand of us, to aid in disseminating such a wise, patriotic public sentiment as will rise above the strifes of section, into the imposing sense of the unspeakable value of the Union.

Of the value of that Union, guided and animated, by an intelligent sense among the people of its guarantees and their obligations, who may adequately speak? Who, standing here, with its beneficent results flowing in his life and character, and filling all the measure of his best recollections, will venture to declare the depth of its soundings?—Who, looking back to the establishment of this Constitutional Union, will declare, where otherwise would have been these our liberties, these our enjoyments, these our precious inheritances of security and freedom, wide as the wide realm of our common country?

These our lakes and rivers have floated no armed and pennoned barges of hostile States or Confederacies. From their shores, have frowned no opposing cannon, nor morning reveille nor sentinel's cry, have betokened the watchful vigilance of jealous thick-clustering nationalities. But, peacefully, quietly, one after another—star after star—have State after state come in, to no galling yoke, to no debasing servitude; but, to an honorable, harmonious, common nationality, each moving separate and free, yet united,

“Distinct as the billows, but one as the Sea.”

We are here as Americans. We know no other history. Our story is a unit. There is no gap. From childhood to manhood, we have known no other language. In all we possess of historic recollections, in all we feel of patriotic fervor, we are AMERICANS, and AMERICANS only. In all we are or have been, we are bound up in a common nationality. We look back to all our distinguished men in every path of renown—to all the illustrious deeds and and honorable achievements that illustrate the pages of our country's history, as belonging to us—as related to us, in no other sense than as Americans.

We have looked within no local limits, when our hearts of youth or of manhood thrilled as we heard a Decatur, a Bainbridge or a Perry, shouting in the victories of Erie or of old Ocean. We feel no other than a broad nationality, glow within us, as we follow the gallant Scott up the heights of Queenstown, or rehearse the story of the Rio Grande and the march to Mexico. There is no commu-

nion with sectional pride, as we con the roll of our civic fame—its names of renown, in every walk of genius and of art.

It is not Beotia speaking to Sparta, nor Athens to Beotia, Behold an Epaminondas! Behold an Aristides! But in the height and depth, in the entire magnitude of the glory of these deeds and names, the same star-spangled banner covers them all! What voices, then, from all we feel or know, from the past, the present and the future, are calling upon us, this day, to take upon ourselves, anew the vows of Union! Nature, indeed has made this, our inheritance,

“A union of lakes, a union of lands.”

But be it ours—be it ours to make it,

“A union of HEARTS—a union of hands.”

Let us foster the charities of a common brotherhood. Let the cherished sentiment of UNION, mingle and glow in all our teachings. Let childhood, with kindling eye, hear of it from parental lips. Let hoary age whitening under its benignity, forget it not, in his venerated councils.

Fellow citizens: by the banks of our beautiful Potomac lies inurned the dust of him, whose farewell words, are in our memories, deprecating the strifes of section, and invoking forever the spirit of Union. WASHINGTON speaks from his tomb!

On the site of the Capital, which bears that illustrious name, American gratitude, is now erecting an ennobling testimonial of patriotic recollections.

The lofty entablature, which is to bear to coming time, the veneration of this age of Americans, for the virtues and character of Washington is ascending. With a propriety as beautiful, as it is honorable, the States are contributing their marble offerings to grace and support the shaft commemorative of him who was the common benefactor.

Let us imitate this example. *Let us put the pledges of our hearts into the cause of this bountiful Union.*—Let us build it up upon their imperishable basis. Let us cement it with our choicest affections, and crown it with our highest aspirations. So shall it endure, with an ever enlarging circle of benefaction, when decay shall have fixed upon the monument, and its marble is crumbling into dust.

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